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## **Acronyms and Abbreviations**

AFASS	Acceptable, Feasible, Affordable, Safe and Sustainable
AIDS	Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
ARVS	Antiretroviral Drugs
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic Acid
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
MCH	Maternal Child Health
MoH	Ministry of Health
MTCT	Mother to child transmission
NAC	National AIDS Council
NASCOP	National AIDS and STD Control Programme
PLWA	People Living with HIV and AIDS
PMTCT	Prevention of mother to child Transmission
RNA	Ribonucleic Acid
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS
UNGASS	United Nations General Assembly Special Session
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VCT	Voluntary counselling and testing
WHO	World Health Organisation
ZDHS	Zambia Demographic and Health Survey

**Declaration**

I, Maurice Mwale, hereby declare that the work presented in this dissertation, for the award of Master of Public Health at the University of Zambia, represents my own work and has not been presented either wholly or in part for any other Master of Public Health, Degree, Diploma or other qualifications at this or another University.

I further declare that all the sources I have quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. This dissertation has been prepared in compliance with the guidelines for the Master of Public Health Dissertations of the University of Zambia.

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**Certificate of Approval of Dissertation**

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## **Abstract**

Against a background of a high HIV prevalence among pregnant women and an absence of interventions to curb HIV transmission to children associated with high HIV infant and childhood mortality and morbidity in Africa, this study was undertaken to determine the social factors that influence infant feeding practices among HIV positive women in Kasama, Northern Province.

This was a cross-sectional study and was descriptive in nature. The study was conducted in Northern Province, Kasama District at 2 clinics- the Kasama Urban clinic and the Location clinic. The study recruited HIV positive mothers under the MCH programs in Kasama from the 2 clinics. 196 pregnant mothers were systematically random sampled for the study from the two clinics.

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS. Data were presented in the form of tables and graphs with explanatory narratives in accordance with the study objectives and hypothesis. The Chi-square statistics was used to test possible relationships between the independent and dependent variables at the 5% level of significance.

Results of the study showed that most mothers were exclusively breastfeeding as they should. Only 11% of the HIV positive mothers used mixed feeding on their infants. Current infant feeding practices was found not to be associated ( $p > 0.05$ ) with most of the demographic variables: maternal age, marital status of mother, level of education and employment status of mother, and religion. Neither were any of the economic factors associated with infant feeding practices. However, mothers who reported that they had received information about breast feeding practices in relation to MTC were more likely to breast feed their children ( $p < 0.05$ ). Nurses also were found to influence mother's choice of infant feeding practices ( $p < 0.05$ ).

The study concludes that infant feeding practices is affected by certain demographic and maternal factors. The relationship between maternal age and current feeding practices is not statistically significant, though the percentage of mothers who chose to exclusively breastfeed increased with age.